

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MEXICO 01473 262327Z
ACTION OES-07

INFO OCT-01 ARA-14 ISO-00 EPA-04 AGRE-00 SP-02 EB-08
CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-02 USIA-15
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FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7838

UNCLAS MEXICO 01473

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SENV, MX
SUBJECT: DATA FOR THE YEAR 2000 STUDY
REF: (A) 76 MEXICO A-191; (B) STATE 2024

1. AS DISCUSSED IN REF (A), WE BELIEVE THAT SOIL EROSION IS ONE OF MEXICO'S GREATEST PROBLEMS. THE GOM ALSO BELIEVES THIS AND HAS RECENTLY LAUNCHED A NATIONAL REFORESTATION AND SOCIAL BETTERMENT PROGRAM IN JILOTEPEC, STATE OF MEXICO, AS PART OF THE LOPEZ PORTILLO ADMINISTRATION'S "ALLIANCE FOR PRODUCTION." INTENT OF THE NEW PROGRAM IS TO HALT EROSION, PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT, AND PROMOTE FORESTATION. VARIOUS GOVERNMENT AGENCIES WILL BE INVOLVED IN THIS EFFORT.

2. THE FOLLOWING ATTEMPTS TO ANSWER PARA 4 OF REFTTEL (B), BASED LARGELY ON "UNOFFICIAL DATA" AND OBSERVATION OF KEY PERSONNEL IN SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION AT THE AGRICULTURE AND WATER RESOURCES SECRETARIAT (SARH). REF (A) IS ALSO RECOMMENDED FOR USEFUL BACKGROUND:

(A) WE HAVE NO ESTIMATE OF TOTAL DEFORESTATION IN MEXICO, BUT HAVE ONE THAT SAYS THAT, IN TROPICAL ZONES ONLY, SOME 80,000 HECTARES ANNUALLY ARE BEING SUBJECTED TO "SLASH AND BURN" TECHNIQUES, WHICH LEADS AT BEST TO

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 MEXICO 01473 262327Z

TWO GOOD HARVESTS AND THEN THE LAND IS LOST. GOOD FORESTRY PRACTICES HAVE NOT BEEN USED UNTIL NOW (WITH SOME EXCEPTIONS). AS NOTED, A MAJOR REFORESTATION PROGRAM IS JUST BEGINNING. WHETHER NEW PROGRAM WILL PROVE ADEQUATE HAS YET TO BE DETERMINED.

(B) WE HAVE NO FIGURES, BUT ARE CONVINCED THAT ALL

MENTIONED PROCESSES ARE OCCURRING HERE AND CONTRIBUTING TO
SIGNIFICANT LOSS OF AGRICULTURAL LAND TO CULTIVATION.
SARH IS CONCERNED WITH PROBLEM, BUT EFFORTS TO DATE HAVE
NOT MARKEDLY REDUCED THE DETERIORATION.

(C) IT IS ESTIMATED THAT IT COSTS 50,000 TO 60,000
PESOS TO DEVELOP AN ADDITIONAL HECTARE OF IRRIGATED LAND.
(22.6 PESOS EQUALS US\$ 1.) SEASONAL LAND CAN BE
DEVELOPED, WITH DRAINAGE, FOR 25,000 TO 30,000 PESOS PER
HECTARE. SOME 12 MILLION HECTARES HAVE A POTENTIAL FOR
IRRIGATED CULTIVATION AND SOME 18 MILLION HECTARES FOR
SEASONAL CULTIVATION. AN EIGHT-FOLD INCREASE IN CROP
PRODUCTION IS SAID TO BE THEORETICALLY POSSIBLE BY THE
YEAR 2000, THOUGH WE HAVE GREAT DOUBTS THAT THIS COULD
REALLY BE BROUGHT ABOUT IN PRACTICE.

(D) NO DATA AVAILABLE ON YIELD GAINS ATTAINABLE FROM
TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE. LUCEY

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Message Attributes

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